

WRITTEN QUESTION P-3625/09  
by Giusto Catania (GUE/NGL)  
to the Commission

Subject: Break-up of the Tirrenia shipping company and discontinuation of the main services connecting Sardinia with the Italian mainland

In its 2007 budget, the Italian Government made more than € 1.4 billion available to restructure the Tirrenia shipping company. The company, which is 100% owned by the Treasury Ministry, provides public service ferry services which are essential for the free movement of island residents and goods.

The Italian Government had given the Commission an undertaking to use those State funds to facilitate the gradual transition, by 2012, to a complete opening of the market in maritime cabotage services while guaranteeing employment, efficient services and improved on-board safety for passengers and crew.

The current Government, however, is proceeding to sell off the Tirrenia company, raising the prospect of the transfer of essential and more profitable routes such as Genoa - Porto Torres and Genoa - Olbia, and is reducing crew numbers to a dangerous extent, thus lowering the standard of service provided.

The Government has failed to respect its undertaking to overhaul and relaunch the company. Moreover, employees have received no information in accordance with the provisions of Directives 2002/14/EC<sup>1</sup> and 2001/23/EC<sup>2</sup> in the event of the transfer of some branches of the company's operations and there has been no transparency as to whether plans are afoot to issue a call for tenders for services on new or existing routes.

Employees in the sector, including employees of the regional subsidiaries Caremar, Siremar and Toremar, are alarmed at this situation and have mobilised to avert the threat of dismissals and the discontinuation of maritime operations.

In view of the foregoing,

Does the Commission consider that it should call on the Italian Government to abide by the undertakings it made two years ago to the Commission with regard to funding and the agreed timetable for the relaunching in 2012 of the maritime cabotage service between mainland Italy and the islands while fulfilling the obligation to provide essential public services?

Since it appears that the process of progressively hiving-off sections of the company's operations has begun, does the Commission consider that the provisions of the above directives are being observed as regards the obligation to provide adequate information and to hold the appropriate negotiations with the social partners with a view to protecting jobs?

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<sup>1</sup> OJ L 80, 23.3.2002, p. 29.

<sup>2</sup> OJ L 82, 22.3.2001, p. 16.